

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Storm Debris Creates Hazardous Conditions on Beaches

VENTURA -- The recent storms have choked local beaches with tons of twisted tree limbs and other debris, causing California State Park officials to advise visitors to exercise caution when visiting State Beaches in the Ventura and Santa Barbara area until the debris can be removed, which may not be for several weeks.

State Parks officials are planning to remove the debris from the popular beach areas as soon as the major storm season is over. Removing it now could be a waste of money if future storms dumped additional debris on the newly cleaned beaches. In the meantime, State Park District Superintendent Rich Rojas cautioned, "We are alerting our visitors to use extra care when visiting the beach for the next couple of months."

Not only can the wood debris be unsafe to climb on, but there are also objects such as hypodermic needles, broken glass and jagged metal scattered throughout the debris. "You never know what you'll come across in these debris piles," Rojas said. "Our patrol officers have even heard reports of rattlesnakes hiding among the logs."

State Park Lifeguards advise visitors to take the following precautions at the beach:

- Don't climb on or over the wood debris, which is extremely unstable and can shift.
- Stay away from objects such as hypodermic needles. Needles should be reported to Lifeguards, Rangers or the Police.
- Stay out of the water for 72 hours following storms when the water may have unsafe levels of bacteria.
- Be alert for floating logs in the surf, which can be difficult to see and extremely dangerous to surfers and waders, especially when the waves are large.
- Stay away from moving or flowing water where it crosses the beach.

Lifeguards also advised visitors to get prompt medical attention if injured, even for minor injuries if they involve a break in the skin. They also warn against setting fire to the wood, which is illegal. Violators will be cited, Rojas said.

State Park Lifeguards are on duty at local State Beaches during the day but are on a reduced winter schedule, so their coverage is not as great as during the summer. They are connected to the 9-1-1 emergency system and will respond when notified.

For further information, contact Lifeguard Headquarters at San Buenaventura State Beach, (805) 648-3321 or the State Park District Office, (805) 585-1850.

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